



# SMOG CHECK ADVISORY

Official Publication of the California Department of Consumer Affairs/Bureau of Automotive Repair May 1999

## Keller and Vann Resign BAR Leadership Positions Effective April 30

**B**ureau of Automotive Repair Chief Marty Keller and Chief of Staff Leon G. Vann, Jr. resigned their positions, effective April 30.

Keller, 47, was named BAR chief in 1995 in the midst of implementation of the state's Enhanced Smog Check Program. He successfully managed that implementation despite numerous legislative changes and intense pressure from various groups throughout the process.

Prior to being named Chief of BAR, Keller served in a variety of positions with the Department of Consumer Affairs. He also designed and established the Education branch of the Department's Communications and Education Division, to develop public education components for the Smog Check Program.

After announcing his resignation, Keller said he will be taking an extended vacation and may begin to work on other projects, including writing a book about his experiences working in government.

Vann joined BAR three years ago when former Chief of Staff, Larry Sherwood, resigned. Prior to his appointment at BAR, Vann was Chief of Engineering and Satellite Wagering Operations at the Department of Agriculture's California Fairs and Expositions. He is expected to take a position with the California Air Resources Board. ❖

## Thanks for the Opportunities, Keller Says

**W**hile comedian Bob Hope always sang thanks for the memories at the end of his performance, BAR's outgoing chief, Marty Keller, said thanks for the opportunity to serve consumer groups, his staff, the Governor, and the auto repair industry.

"Far and away, this has been the biggest challenge of my life," he said. "With great pride and humility, I am grateful that I got the chance to do this. It has been a growing experience."

That growth included learning patience, discerning key issues from every point of view, and applying political assessments that would allow him to advise the Governor competently about BAR's obstacles and opportunities. Keller also had to learn simultaneously the technical and political aspects of the auto repair industry and the Smog Check Program, to understand the public relations implications, and to speak articulately on his feet.

"It was a wonderful public policy opportunity because it combined economics, the environment, public health, a changing marketplace, consumers, industry, and public relations challenges," he said. "It has everything to make you stretch and learn how to deal with the problems."

Although Keller will spend some time after he leaves reflecting on his experiences at BAR, he had already begun the process before his April 30 exit date. He explained that part of the joy of being BAR Chief was having the opportunity to build an Enhanced Smog Check Program.



**Marty Keller, BAR Chief**

"In a very real way, we were all learning as we went along, and around the world people are looking at what we're doing (in Smog Check in California)," he said. "It is unique and it has important social value."

He also said he hoped the industry would continue to pursue the national dialogue about the challenges it faces that began as a result of the conference hosted by California last September.

"I think we have only begun to discover the opportunities for improvement through that process," he said.

Keller wishes his successor well with the challenges because he believes he or she, too, will find it to be a great source of personal growth.

"I fully believe that I met the challenges, and I hope to continue to grow so that I will be better tomorrow than I am today," he said. ❖



## SNAPSHOT

Below are the Smog Check inspection and repair statistics for the months of February and March 1999. Acceleration Simulation Mode (ASM) and Two-Speed Idle (TSI) data are combined.

	FEBRUARY	MARCH
<b>Program Volume</b>		
Tests Conducted	917,766 *	1,025,423 *
Vehicles Tested	715,851	800,470
Vehicles Failed	56,505	64,288
Certificates Issued	783,034	928,467
<b>Type of Failure</b>		
Tailpipe:	42,489 ( 5.9%)	42,489 ( 5.8%)
Gross Polluters	11,911 ( 1.7%) **	11,911 ( 1.8%) **
Visual	10,644 ( 1.5%)	10,644 ( 1.6%)
Functional	26,001 ( 3.6%)	26,001 ( 3.7%)
<b>Failure by Station Type</b>		
Test & Repair	20,869 ( 5.0%)	23,602 ( 5.2%)
GSGR	10,673 ( 6.7%)	11,723 ( 6.7%)
GPC	4,908 ( 7.8%)	5,923 ( 8.2%)
Test-Only	20,048 (27.2%)	23,035 (27.2%)
Other (fleets)	7 ( 1.8%)	5 ( 1.5%)
<b>Consumer Assistance/Referee Centers</b>		
Tests	1,581	1,887
Failures	913 (57.7%)	1,088 (57.7%)
Gross Polluter Tests	26	14
Gross Polluter Failures	7 (26.9%)	1 (7.14%)
Certificates Issued	968	1,148
Cost Waivers Issued	92	132
Hardship Extensions Issued	212	214
<b>Average Reported Repair Costs</b>		
Vehicles Repaired	57,361	68,856
Average Cost (statewide)	\$ 95	\$ 96
Test & Repair Stations	\$ 86	\$ 88
GSGR Stations	\$ 98	\$ 98
GPC Pilot Stations	\$138	\$143

\* Includes multiple tests on same vehicle.

\*\* Subset of tailpipe failures.

## ISSUES ...

The Issues & Answers column allows readers to ask questions about topics that are of general interest to the auto repair industry and the Smog Check program. Answers to your questions will be researched and published here. Submit your questions to:

Smog Check Advisory  
P.O. Box 188978  
Sacramento, CA 95818

All questions must be accompanied by a name, address, and telephone number and will be verified before publication. Questions will be answered and published on a space-available basis. —Editor

**Q.** Does the O<sub>2</sub> sensor control timing as well as air/fuel mixture? 91 octane has more additives, burns slower, so what sensor detects this? Why does (Marty) Keller say "Smog Check goal has changed"? Thought we always tested emissions and, if required, made repairs.

—Harvey Dubner, Sonoma, CA

## 1999 Calendar of Coming Events



### May

- 4** ASE 1999 exams
- 6** ASE 1999 exams
- 11** ASE 1999 exams
- 31** State Holiday—  
Memorial Day

### June

- 15** Industry Awareness  
Day—State Capitol  
(Contact your association  
for more details.)

### July

- 1** Fuel Cap Testing  
Begins in  
Non-Enhanced Areas
- 5** State Holiday—  
Independence Day

## ... & ANSWERS

**A.** The oxygen (O<sub>2</sub>) sensor does not influence ignition timing. The job of the O<sub>2</sub> is twofold. First, it creates the conditions necessary to operate a three-way catalytic converter. It accomplishes this by varying the air/fuel mixture back and forth from rich to lean. By doing so, the exhaust gases experience periodic surplus in both oxygen (lean air/fuel) and carbon monoxide (rich air/fuel), as the O<sub>2</sub> switches. This switching is necessary to operate both the reduction and oxidation portions of the three-way catalytic converter.

The second responsibility of the O<sub>2</sub> sensor is to report back to the powertrain control module (PCM) on how well it is maintaining a stoichiometric air/fuel mixture.

Vehicles don't have octane sensors, although some variable fuel vehicles have sensors to determine the type of fuel being burned so that proper operating parameters can be maintained. Perhaps the closest sensor to determine fuel burn time is a Knock Sensor (KS). The KS is a piezoelectric or piezoresistive sensor that can "hear" an engine ping. When a ping is detected, the timing is retarded until the ping goes away. In most instances, timing would be retarded faster and farther on a vehicle using low octane as opposed to high octane fuel.

—BAR technical staff

The goal of the Smog Check Program remains the same. It still aims to reduce vehicle emissions and meet federal Clean Air Act requirements. To do so, however, greater *emphasis* has been placed on effective repairs. Such changes include tougher waiver requirements and a focus on helping those who cannot afford to make the repairs (Low-Income Repair Assistance and Vehicle Retirement Programs). It is also true that a properly performed inspection is equally critical, in order to identify those vehicles needing repair.

—Marty Keller

## Inspections Uncover Deficiencies

**M**ost licensed Smog Check stations are deficient in five areas, according to the initial quality assurance (QA) inspections recently conducted by BAR representatives at more than 250 stations statewide.

"We've identified five major pattern deficiencies among the stations we've visited," said Mike Vanderlaan, Manager of Smog Check Field Operations. "Preliminary findings indicate that approximately four out of every five stations failed an aspect of the inspection, either by failing to properly maintain records or equipment, failing to properly enter repair data in the test analyzer system (TAS), making errors while entering Vehicle Identification Numbers (VINs) and license plate numbers, or failing to use diagnostic equipment."

### *Records Maintenance*

Too many stations are failing to maintain *all* Vehicle Inspection Reports (VIRs), estimates, and repair orders as required by law.

### *Equipment Maintenance*

- ❖ TAS filters are not being changed in accordance with manufacturer recommended replacement intervals.
- ❖ Some stations are using shop compressor air to calibrate the analyzer instead of properly certified bottled zero air.
- ❖ Broken and worn analyzer sample hoses and probes are not being replaced.
- ❖ Equipment is not being properly maintained, leading to excessive analyzer lockouts and/or internal hardware damage.

### *Repair Data Entry*

Reviews of each Smog Check station's repair records and TAS data show that stations are not entering the repair information properly or that the information does not accurately reflect

repairs described on their invoices. Stations are required to enter into the TAS all Smog Check-related repairs and costs, including parts, labor, and diagnosis.

### *Vehicle Inspection Errors*

A high number of data entry errors are being made when the VIN and license plate number are entered as part of the Smog Check process. These errors cause excessive "no match" rates with the VID that make it difficult for consumers to complete their registration process with the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV).

### *Use of Diagnostic Equipment*

As part of the quality assurance inspection, licensed technicians are asked to demonstrate their ability to use the required diagnostic equipment, such as the Digital Storage Oscilloscope (DSO).

BAR representatives found that many licensed Smog Check technicians were unfamiliar with the DSO, and in some stations the DSO had never even been unwrapped or used. The DSO is required in all Enhanced Area Smog Check stations, and training for its operation is included in the 20-hour update training course. It is an excellent diagnostic tool for technicians and is used to detect problems with electrical circuits in vehicles. (See September 1997 and September 1998 editions of the *Smog Check Advisory*.)

"Correcting these and other station deficiencies discovered during the QA inspection process is critical to the success of the Smog Check Program in meeting vehicle emissions reduction requirements," Vanderlaan said. "We also applaud those stations that passed all elements of the inspection." ❖

# SMOG CHECK STATION CITATIONS



FACILITY NAME	ADDRESS	CITY	ZIP	LEVL	AD NUMBER	CITATION NUMBER	ASSES AMOUNT	ASSES DUE	DUE MAIL
RunRiteAutoService#4	2200Vineyard#J	Escondido	92029	1	AL197020	C990156	00025000	03/05/99	10/27/98
AutoWorks	1136PattersonRoad	Orad	93035	3	AB171088	C990206	00150000	03/05/99	12/03/98
RamonChevronService	68010RamonRoad	Cathedral	92234	1	AB151697	C990214	00025000	03/01/99	01/07/99
BurbankAutoElectric	11201BurbankBlvd.	NorthHollywood	91601	1	AL175603	C990244	00150000	03/12/99	01/20/99
UnitedAutoWorks,Inc.	7759CanogaAvenue	CanogaPark	91304	1	AD199167	C990248	00150000	03/17/99	01/25/99
AAASmog&AutoRepair	505WestBaselineAvenue	SanBernardino	92410	1	AD199007	C990250	00025000	03/08/99	01/28/99
ExpressAutomotiveService	61123rdStreet	Richmond	94804	2	AE147167	C990254	00075000	03/17/99	01/28/99
ShahTexaco	1602EastValleyParkway	Escondido	92027	1	AD172093	C990256	00025000	03/08/99	02/02/99
AnaheimAutoService	1222EastAnaheimStreet	Wilmington	90744	1	AG184834	C990258	00025000	03/17/99	02/02/99
DeAnzaMobil	7850LimonteAvenue	Riverside	92509	1	AM144169	C990260	00025000	03/29/99	02/02/99
SteveAutoRepair	4515GreshamStreet	SanDiego	92109	1	AH190349	C990265	00025000	03/10/99	02/04/99
Henry'sServiceCenter	20944S.NormandieAve.	Torrance	90502	1	AG200543	C990267	00025000	03/22/99	02/04/99
Gene'sUnionService	1085PalmAvenue	Imperial	91932	1	AF022799	C990269	00025000	03/15/99	02/04/99
DanHolmbergChevronInc.*	5401BalboaAvenue	SanDiego	92111	1	AA084387	C990272	00025000	03/23/99	02/16/99
RanchoDelOroUnocal***	4181OceansideBlvd.	Oceanside	92056	1	AM181742	C990274	00025000	03/22/99	02/22/99
EmeraldMobil	170NorthEmeraldDrive	Vista	92083	1	AA192661	C990278	00025000	03/25/99	02/16/99
Hong'sAutoService*	1242PacificCoastHighway	HarborCity	90710	3	AE102829	C990282	00150000	03/29/99	02/26/99
AlamoChevron	3177DanvilleHighway	Alamo	94507	2	AJ168957	C990289	00075000	03/18/99	02/22/99
Neshek'sAutoRepair	5034East3rdStreet	LosAngeles	90022	1	AD014076	C990312	00025000	03/29/99	03/11/99

\* Stations that have had their Gold Shield Guaranteed Repair (GSGR) certification withdrawn.

\*\* Stations that have had their GSGR certification and Gross Polluter Certification (GPC) Pilot authority withdrawn (none reported).

\*\*\* Stations that have had their GSGR certification, GPC, and LIRAP authority withdrawn.



## THE BOTTOM LINE



- 108** Cut score on the current smog exam.
- 77.66** Percent of technicians who passed EA Smog Check exam in March 1999.
- 10,026** Technicians who completed BAR-978-hour Transition Training.
- 597** Technicians who completed the BAR-9720-Hour Update Training (of approximately 8,700 EA technicians who will need it by June 30, 2000).
- 8,627** Advanced (EA) technicians licensed as of April 1, 1999.
- 4,415** Basic (EB) Area technicians licensed as of April 1, 1999.
- 2,572** Gold Shield Guaranteed Repair Stations Statewide as of April 1, 1999.
- 4,866** Test & Repair stations statewide as of April 1, 1999.
- 260** Test-Only stations statewide as of April 1, 1999.
- 370** Test-Only lanes statewide as of April 1, 1999.



## New Licensing Rules Cancel Expired Registrations

New legislation effective January 1, 1999, gives BAR the authority to cancel auto repair dealer (ARD) registrations expired more than three years.

In addition, if the registration is canceled due to delinquency, the repair dealer must:

- ❖ Apply for a new registration.
- ❖ Meet current registration requirements.
- ❖ Pay applicable fees.

Expired registrations that are renewed within three years are also subject to all accrued renewal and delinquency fees.

It should also be noted that operating an auto repair facility with an expired registration is illegal and may result in administrative disciplinary action and/or criminal action. ❖



*First in a Series*

## An Online Chat with iATN's Brent Black . . .

**B**rent Black is the founder of the International Automotive Technicians Network (iATN), a popular cyber place where technicians and BAR officials gather online to discuss and solve difficult repair problems and to share opinions and ideas about auto repair related industry trends.

**Q.** *Your website at [www.iatn.net](http://www.iatn.net) is the one most talked about and admired among the technicians I have talked to recently, so tell me...when did you start it?*

**A.** Early in 1995, just before the Internet started to become popular and just before the World Wide Web first took off.

**Q.** *How does it work?*

**A.** That's a tough question to answer. It's getting pretty complex, but basically it is an online community of automotive professionals who interact through a series of resources, including e-mail, web-based discussion forums, and live chat conferences (both moderated with guest speakers and open with no moderator). We also host gatherings whenever possible to let members who have gotten to know each other meet in person.

**Q.** *What went into your thinking when you started it?*

**A.** The Internet was a perfect medium to allow people with similar interests to interact. It allowed techs to help each other solve difficult technical issues while learning from each other at the same time, and it is very appealing for everyone involved.

**Q.** *Has it worked the way you envisioned?*

**A.** Yes. It has its difficult moments, but overall it works very well.

**Q.** *Can you give me an idea of how many members you have and how many visits you get a day or a month?*

**A.** iATN is currently the largest network of automotive technicians in the world, with 19,908 members from over 94 countries worldwide — with 362,217 combined years of experience (as of April 16, 1999). Our site is currently receiving over three million hits per month, and that number is increasing steadily. We delivered over 14 million e-mails between members last month [March] alone.

**Q.** *What is your background? Are you a technician, shop owner, computer geek, visionary, local hero, all of the above...and MORE?*

**A.** Ha! I have owned a shop for around 15 years and worked as a tech for most of my life. I think my first computer had 4K of memory in it and was backed up to a cassette tape.

**Q.** *I'm not eligible [to have access], so I don't have a password and, therefore, no access to what is being said in the legendary chat room, so how does one get access?*

**A.** If you do not meet the eligibility requirements, you will be limited to the public area of our network. This area shows a listing of members and includes a shop finder to help locate a member facility anywhere in the world.

**Q.** *Don't you have to have a minimum of four years' experience to be able to join?*

**A.** Yes, we require a minimum of four years of working experience. However, we will make an exception if the technician is currently ASE certified.

**Q.** *I'm told it is a free service. Is that only to technicians and shop owners who are eligible? Do companies and organizations have to pay something to get to be a sponsor?*

**A.** The basic membership is free for new members, and we offer an upgraded membership that gives access to advanced features for a fee.

**Q.** *Who are some of your sponsors, and how do you get to be a sponsor?*

**A.** Our industry sponsors include many of the leading automotive companies and organizations in the world, from Snap-on Tools and NAPA Auto Parts, to ASE and ASA. A complete list of industry sponsors is available online at [www.iatn.net/atn/](http://www.iatn.net/atn/). Our member sponsors, whose support and feedback determine the direction of the group, consist of technicians, instructors, shop owners, and other industry leaders from around the world.

**Q.** *Are there any future plans for the website or related activities that you can talk about?*

**A.** We are constantly developing new resources based on the feedback of our members. We recently put up General Motors and Ford technical sections and will be adding several interactive training modules to the network over the next six months.

**Q.** *What was your biggest or most unexpected surprise in this project?*

**A.** I would have to say that my biggest surprise was simply the number of gifted technicians from around the world who are willing to share their knowledge to help others. The education that takes place on this network every day is incredible. One of my favorite side benefits of the interaction here is the many friendships that have been formed between members of this group.

**Q.** *So, are you getting rich now? Are you the Bill Gates of online auto repair chat rooms?*

**A.** Ha! You're funny. ❖

*Editor's Note: This is the first in a series of stories dedicated to helping technicians become aware of online or other hotline or subscription services that provide help to technicians for making correct repairs. While this article presents an interview with Mr. Black, it does not constitute an endorsement by BAR of iATN products or services.*



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Sacramento ..... (916) 255-4200  
Culver City ..... (310) 410-0024  
San Jose ..... (408) 277-1860  
Fresno ..... (559) 445-5015  
South El Monte... (626) 575-6934  
Fullerton ..... (714) 680-7851  
Hayward ..... (510) 785-1961  
Oceanside ..... (760) 439-0942

DCA Cashiering . (916) 322-7002  
DCA Licensing ... (916) 322-4010  
ET Help Desk ..... (916) 255-4476  
MCI ..... (800) 731-SMOG

(Then press 5 for technical support)

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**DCA HOTLINE: (800) 952-5210**

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## Little Scoops...

- ❖ The annual Clean Air Awards luncheon sponsored by the American Lung Association's Emigrant Trails Chapter is scheduled for May 12 at the Radisson Hotel in Sacramento.
- ❖ There are now seven participants working in BAR's Welfare-to-Work Program, and BAR may be turning to the auto repair industry for future apprenticeships, placement, and/or sponsorships of participants.
- ❖ Good news for motorists who need financial help to make repairs: the Low-Income Repair Assistance Program (LIRAP) is now available statewide as of March 31, 1999. Effective May 1, 1999, the consumer co-pay for emissions-related repairs will be \$75.
- ❖ A more concise, user-friendly redesign of BAR's website at [www.smogcheck.ca.gov](http://www.smogcheck.ca.gov) is underway.
- ❖ Under BAR's Vehicle Retirement Program (VRP), 292 vehicles have been retired as of April 23, 1999. Of those, 198 were Gross Polluters. The latest profile reveals that 1982 was the average model year of the retired vehicles, of which 66 percent, or two-thirds, were imports and 34 percent, or one-third, were domestic vehicles.